DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 371 577 FL 022 048

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TITLE Naturally Simplified Input, Comprehension, and Second Language Acquisition.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 18p.; In: Tickoo, M. L., Ed. Simplification: Theory and Application. Anthology Series 31; see FL 022 043.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; Educational Media; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Instructional Materials; Language Research; Language Usage; *Media Adaptation; *Reading Comprehension; Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning; *Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS *Simplification (Language)

ABSTRACT

This article examines the concept of simplification in second language (SL) learning, reviewing research on the simplified input that both naturalistic and classroom SL learners receive. Research indicates that simplified input, particularly if derived from naturally occurring interactions, does aid comprehension but has not been shown to facilitate acquisition. Several studies demonstrate that providing learners with opportunities for communicating in a classroom setting leads to vocabulary acquisition. They also show that the learning that takes place is retained better than that resulting from rote memorization and is quantitatively greater than the learning that occurs as a result of trying to comprehend pre-simplified input. A distinction needs to be made between naturally simplified input and pedagogically simplified input, and with regard to the latter a further distinction between graded input and input as dependent exemplification. Discussions of simplified input need to distinguish the part that it plays in comprehension from its role in acquisition. (MDM)

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NATURALLY SIMPLIFIED INPUT, COMPREHENSION AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Rod Ellis

Introduction

Both naturalistic and classroom second language (L2) learners received simplified input (i.e. 'input' that is in some way simpler than that received by a native speaker engaged in a comparable activity)[1]. In the case of naturalistic settings the input is not simplified intentionally, but rather as part of the process of communicating with learners whose proficiency in the L2 has 'gaps' that cause misunderstandings. Input from native speakers that has been naturally simplified is generally referred to as foreigner talk (cf. Hatch, 1978). Input from other learners in the same kind of situation is known as interlanguage talk (cf. Krashen, 1981). Classroom learners may also be exposed to these kinds of simplified input, providing there are real opportunities to communicate in the L2. Teacher-talk has been shown to have similar properties to foreigner talk (cf. Henzl, 1979). However, classroom learners are also likely to receive input that has been pedagogically simplified in one of two ways. One way takes the form of graded input. This entails the preparation of texts (oral or written) in which the input has been intentionally simplified in accordance with (more or less) explicit criteria for determining what is 'simple' and what is 'complex'. In this case, the input is pedagogically simplified but is still intended to engage the learner in the search for meaning. The other way involves what Widdowson (1978) calls dependent exemplification - the preparation of texts (oral or written) in such a way as to focus the learner's attention on specific properties of the target language. Input as dependent exemplification is intended to teach the language rather than to engage the learner in the search for meaning. The principal difference between naturally simplified input and pedagogically simplified input (whether graded or dependent exemplification) is that whereas the former arises spontaneously in the course of interaction in the classroom, the latter is pre-planned. These basic distinctions are shown diagramatically in Figure 1.

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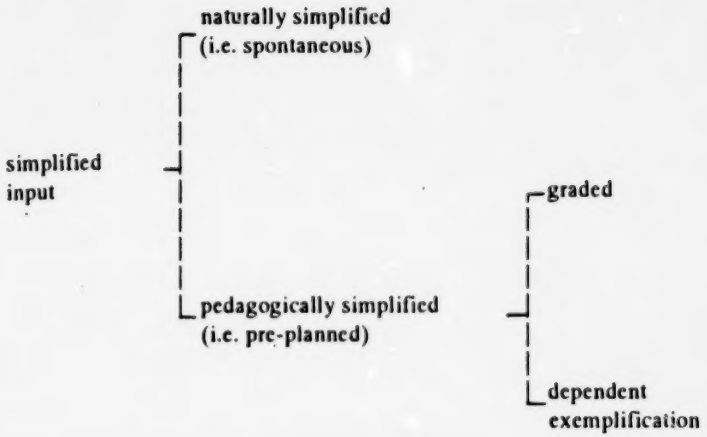

Figure 1: Types of Simplified Input in Language Teaching

The distinction between what Stern (1990) has referred to as the experiential and the analytical approaches to language teaching rests in part on what kind of input classroom learners receive[2]. The experiential approach seeks to provide learners with input that has been 'tuned' to a level that facilitates comprehension as part and parcel of trying to communicate with them. The input that learners receive, therefore, consists of naturally simplified input (in the form of teacher talk and interlanguage talk in the classroom) and also graded simplified input[3]. The analytical approach on the other hand places the emphasis on simplified input as dependent exemplification. It involves intentionally and systematically organising the input for the learners so they can learn specific linguistic features. It is a matter of some controversy whether language learning is best promoted by means of input of the experiential kind or by dependent exemplification. This paper, however, is not primarily concerned with this controversy. Rather it seeks to examine which kind of simplified input (naturally simplified vs. graded pedagogically simplified) is most effective in an experiential approach. In so doing, however, it is not intended to disparage the value of dependent exemplification.

The case for simplified input of the experiential kind has been argued most strongly by Krashen (1985). Krashen's Input Hypothesis states that learners progress along a natural order of acquisition by understanding input that contains structures that are a little bit beyond their current level of competence. He emphasizes that as long as the input is understood and there is enough of it, the

learner will automatically be exposed to the necessary grammar, so there is no need for formal instruction. Learners are able to comprehend input containing new linguistic material partly by utilizing contextual clues and partly because it has been 'roughly tuned' through teacher talk and interlanguage talk and by pedagogic grading. Krashen makes out a case for the use of both naturally simplified and graded pedagogically simplified input (henceforth to be referred to simply as 'pedagogically simplified') and appears to see equal value in both.

The Input Hypothesis does not make a clear distinction between simplified input that consists of formal simplifications (i.e. phonological, lexical and grammatical modifications) and simplified input containing interactional simplification (i.e. discourse modifications). Long (1983), however, has advanced the Interaction Hypothesis, according to which it is the modifications that make input comprehensible through the process of negotiating a communication problem that are especially beneficial for L2 acquisition. Long identifies a number of these modifications - clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self-repetitions and other-repetitions. He argues that they help to make unfamiliar linguistic input comprehensible and, therefore, acquirable by the learner. It would appear that Long considers naturally simplified input more likely to facilitate acquisition than pedagogically simplified input.

The purpose of this paper is to report on a number of recent studies carried out by students at Temple University Japan. These papers all address the role of simplified input in an experiential approach to language teaching and provide evidence to suggest that naturally simplified input is of particular value in promoting both comprehension and in facilitating one aspect of L2 acquisition (vocabulary development). The results of these studies suggest that simplified input that occurs naturally in the course of classroom interaction works better for acquisition than pedagogically simplified input.

Simplification, Comprehension and L2 Acquisition

Various claims regarding the effects of simplified input in an experiential approach can be advanced, based on two distinctions (see Figure 2). First, as described above, a distinction can be drawn between naturally simplified input and (graded) pedagogically simplified input. Second, a distinction needs to be made between the effects that such input has on comprehension and on acquisition. The following claims are then possible:

(1) Pedagogically simplified input aids comprehension.

(2) Pedagogically simplified input facilitates acquisition.

(3) Naturally simplified input aids comprehension.

(4) Naturally simplified input facilitates acquisition.

Further claims relating to the relative effectiveness of the two types of input in promoting comprehension and acquisition can also be made:

(5) Naturally simplified input aids comprehension more than pedagogically simplified input.

(6) Naturally simplified input facilitates acquisition more than pedagogically simplified input.

Type of input	Comprehension	Acquisition
Pedagogically simplified		
Naturally simplified		

Figure 2: Input, Comprehension and Acquisition

There is now substantial empirical support for claims (1) and (3). The claim that pedagogically simplified input aids comprehension underlies the long-established tradition of the graded reader. It is supported by the experience of countless teachers and also by studies such as Blau (1982), Johnson (1981) and Urquhart (1984) which indicate that both formal and functional simplifications improve learners' comprehension of written text. Other studies indicate that pre-simplified input can also aid comprehension of spoken text (e.g. Long, 1985). There is also empirical evidence to support claim (5). For example, Pica, Young

and Doughty (1987) compared the effects of pre-modified input (consisting of directions that were longer, more redundant and less complex than directions given to native speaker interlocutors) and interactionally modified input (achieved by providing learners with opportunities to seek verbal assistance when they did not understand a direction) on learners' ability to carry out instructions. They found that the naturally modified input resulted in better comprehension of the instructions than the pedagogically simplified input. Loschky (1989) was also able to show that interactionally modified input resulted in higher levels of comprehension. Simplified input, then, is good for comprehension, especially if the simplifications occur naturally in the course of face-to-face interaction with a teacher.

There have been no studies, however, which lend clear support to claims (2), (4) or (6). So far, researchers have not been able to demonstrate that either pedagogically simplified input or naturally simplified input results in better acquisition. Krashen (forthcoming) surveys countless studies that show a positive correlation between amount of reading and L2 proficiency (and also between amount of reading and writing ability), but it cannot be claimed on the basis of such studies that comprehensible input causes acquisition to take place. There have been few attempts to show that input made comprehensible by means of either pedagogic simplification or natural simplification results in the acquisition of linguistic items that were not previously part of the learners' interlanguage. Those attempts that have been made have proved unsuccessful. For example, Loschky (1989) found that neither pre-simplified nor interactionally modified input was any more effective in promoting the retention of locative forms by classroom learners of L2 Japanese than baseline (unsimplified) input.

There are a number of theoretical objections to the claim that comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition. Sharwood Smith (1986) and Faerch and Kasper (1986) argue that the processes of comprehension and acquisition are not the same. Input that is good for comprehension may not be of any use for acquisition. According to this view, simplified input may help comprehension, but is a waste of time where acquisition is concerned. White (1990) has been particularly hard on simplified input, arguing not only that it cannot assist the learner to discover certain grammatical facts about the language but that it may be even detrimental in that it deprives the learner of useful structural information about the target language grammar. Sato (1986) also queries whether simplified input (in this case derived from interacting naturally in the L2) contributes to acquisition, pointing out that even if learners ultimately succeed in comprehending what is said to them there is no reason why they should pay attention to the linguistic forms that caused them problems in the first place. These

arguments, then, dispute claims (2), (4) and (6). It should be noted, however, that there is no clear empirical evidence to support the arguments.

To sum up, the current state of play in second language acquisition research seems to be this: yes, simplified input, particularly if derived from naturally occurring interactions, does aid comprehension, but no, it has not yet been shown to facilitate acquisition. It is probably comforting to teachers to be told that the traditional use of simplified input in language teaching is good for comprehension and it is useful for them to know that the simplified input that is derived naturally from interaction works better in this respect than pre-simplified input (of the kind found in graded readers or listening comprehension activities), but it may be somewhat worrying to hear that, to date, there is no clear evidence that simplified input of either sort facilitates L2 acquisition and that there are a number of researchers who think that it is wrong to suggest that it does.

Learning Vocabulary with the Help of Simplified Input

The Input Hypothesis and the Interaction Hypothesis are both concerned with the relationship between comprehensible input and the acquisition of L2 grammar. Krashen, for instance, makes a direct link between comprehensible input and the 'natural order' (i.e. the order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes that is evident in naturalistic acquisition). Long, too, views 'acquisition' mainly in terms of grammar. The arguments against these two hypotheses have also focussed on whether simplified input aids grammar learning. The claims derived from the hypotheses, however, are equally applicable to other levels of language. If it can be shown that simplified input enables learners to internalize new lexical items, for instance, then its use in language pedagogy as a device for helping acquisition (rather than just comprehension) will be lent support. In this section a brief account of three recent studies that have looked at the relationship between input (in particular interactionally modified input) and the acquisition of vocabulary will be provided.

The first study sought to compare the effects of three ways of learning vocabulary. Brauer (1991) asked two classes of Japanese high school students (N = 40) to memorise a list of ten new English words (referring to occupations) and their L1 equivalents and another two classes (N = 42) to memorise the same list of words but this time with the support of sentences contextualising the meaning of each word. Another two classes (N = 42) were given a communicative vocabulary lesson. The same ten words were first introduced to the students by means of flash cards with L1 translations. In the next activity the students were asked to rate each

occupation in terms of 'fun', 'amount of income' and 'safety' and then to rank the jobs according to their evaluations of them. In a third activity, the students listened to the teacher reading sentences defining each occupation and had to name them. In the final activity each student was given a slip of paper with a definition of one of the jobs and went round the class asking other students 'What do you do?' and answering the same question according to the sentence on their paper. Brauer was careful to ensure that all three treatments took the same length of time - 25 minutes.

The effects of these treatments were measured by means of a test that required the students to write the Japanese equivalents (in katakana) of the ten English words. This test was administered more or less immediately after the treatments were finished and again two weeks later. There was no difference according to treatment on the immediate post-test with the students in all the classes achieving very high scores (i.e. over 90%). However, the students who had received the communicative vocabulary lesson proved much more successful in retaining the new words. After two weeks they were still able to score 66%, whereas the other two groups of students only managed 54% and 51% respectively - a difference that was statistically significant.

This study suggests that opportunities for communicating do have a real impact on vocabulary learning. In the short term, the time honoured techniques of rote-memorisation (which Japanese high school students use extensively and with considerable success) can be effective in enabling learners to learn the meanings of new words. In the long term, however, such methods may not be so effective, as they do not ensure that the new items are planted deeply in memory. As a result, many of the items may be lost fairly rapidly. Participating in classroom interaction that centres around the new words appears to be equally effective in the short-term but to have the added advantage of ensuring better long-term retention. This advantage is evident even in the case of the 'passive' knowledge of lexical items measured by the kind of post-tests used in Brauer's study; it is interesting to speculate that it would have been even greater if tests calling for 'active' knowledge of the items had been employed.

Brauer's study does not speak directly to the value of naturally simplified input in vocabulary learning, as it provides no information regarding the nature of the interactions in the communicative vocabulary lesson. It seems reasonable to suppose that the information-gap activities Brauer designed for the lesson resulted in the types of modified interaction that Long and others have claimed is important for L2 acquisition. To make strong claims for the effects of natural simplification, however, it is necessary to examine the actual classroom processes that take place. The other two studies did this.

Both studies (Tanaka, 1991, and Yamazaki, 1991) were a replication and an extension of Pica, Young and Doughty's (1987) study. Their aim was to compare the effects of pre-modified input and interactionally modified input on both learners' comprehension and on their acquisition of new vocabulary items. The studies go further than Pica, Young and Doughty's study because they investigate the effects of simplified input on acquisition and not just comprehension. In this respect, they resemble Loschky's (1989) study.

The design of the two studies was identical. Japanese high school students were asked to carry out a task under three different conditions. The task required the students to listen to a native speaker teacher give directions in English regarding where to place a series of objects in a picture of a kitchen. The subjects did not know the English words that labelled the different objects. Two versions of the directions were developed. One was a baseline version, derived from a recording of two native speakers performing the task. The other was a pre-modified version, based on recordings of a native speaker performing the task with three learners from the same population as the subjects of the studies. This version reflected the changes that the native speaker made to the baseline version in carrying out the task. In comparison to the baseline version, the pre-modified version involved a lower rate of speech (146.5 words as opposed to 246.9 words per minute), increased redundancy and greater repetition of the names of the objects. An example will help to give the flavour of the two versions:

Baseline: We have an apple. And I'd like you to put the apple in the sink.

Pre-modified We have an apple. And I'd like you to put the apple in the sink. A sink is a hole and you wash dishes inside it and you can fill it with water. It's a hole in a counter to put water and dishes. Put the apple in the sink.

Altogether there were fifteen directions used in the study. One group of subjects received the baseline (unmodified) version. A second group received the pre-modified version. A third group received the baseline version but was allowed to interact with the teacher whenever they did not understand one of the directions. This group, therefore, received naturally modified input. The following is an example of an exchange generated by the teacher's baseline direction:

Teacher: And after the scouring pad, can you find the ladle? Hang the ladle over the sink too. On the right side of the frying pan.

Student: What is a ladle?

Teacher: A ladle is a big spoon for soup, for serving soup, a big spoon.

Student: Where do I put it?

Teacher: Uh, put it on the right side of the frying pan.

Student: One more time please.

Teacher: Okay. And after the scouring pad, can you find the ladle? Hang the ladle over the sink, too. On the right side of the frying pan.

Student: Where do I put it?

Teacher: Uh, put it ... uh, find the frying pan and put it on the right, the right of the frying pan, the right side.

Student: Is the ladle on the wall?

Teacher: Yes, the ladle is on the wall. Right. Good.

A comprehension score was based on the subjects' responses to the directions. Vocabulary acquisition scores were obtained from post-tests (similar to those used in the Brauer study, which were administered two days after the task and one month after the task) and from a vocabulary recognition test administered two and half months after the task. Thus, the test was administered on three occasions. In addition, the subjects were asked to complete an 'uptake recall chart' (Slimani, 1989) immediately after the lesson; this involved writing down all the new vocabulary items they could recall from the directions they had listened to.

The subjects of the two studies were different. Tanaka investigated 79 third-year students in three intact classes at a public high school in Saitama, near Tokyo. All the students had chosen to study English in elective classes. Yamazaki investigated 127 fourth-year students at a prestigious school in Tokyo. Yamazaki's subjects were in general more highly motivated to learn English than Tanaka's, as

they expected to enter a prestigious Japanese university, for which they would need to obtain high scores in an entrance examination that included a test of English.

The results from these two studies are revealing and interestingly different. With regard to comprehension both studies showed a clear advantage for interactionally modified input. A detailed analysis of the input resulting from the interactional treatment showed that the directions were longer and more redundant than the directions in the pre-modified condition. For example, Tanaka found an average of 4.4 repetitions of the key words per direction in the pre-modified input but a massive 14.7 in the interactionally modified input. Clarification requests by the learners served as triggers for teacher repetition. Furthermore, the difference between the two kinds of input was even greater on those directions where the interactional group scored markedly higher than the pre-modified group. Tanaka found no significant difference in the comprehension scores of the pre-modified and baseline groups, but in Yamazaki's study there was a difference - the pre-modified group achieved a much higher level of comprehension.

Interactionally modified input also works better than pre-modified input where acquisition of new vocabulary items is concerned. In the immediate post-test the subjects who had experienced opportunities to seek clarification when they did not understand did better than those who received pre-adjusted input in both studies. In the case of Tanaka's subjects this advantage was also evident in the subsequent post-tests. In the recognition test administered two and half months after the treatment, the interactional group was able to achieve an average score of nearly 40%, a remarkably high score given that all the words were completely new to the learners before the study commenced. However, the difference became non-significant for post-tests 2 and 3 in the case of Yamakazi's subjects.

The kind of input the learners experienced also had a marked effect on the words they reported having learnt on the uptake chart. In Tanaka's study, the pre-simplified group listed a meagre total of 9 words, whereas the interactional group listed 49 items, over five times as many. The majority of these items occurred in directions that had stimulated a large amount of interactional work. Similar results were obtained by Yamazaki, although the number of uptake items was considerably higher in both conditions. The pre-modified groups claimed 23 words, while the interactionally modified group claimed 96 words.

Yamazaki reports one other interesting result. She found that most of the requests for clarification were performed by just 7 of the 42 subjects in the interactional group. However, of these 7, only 3 obtained comprehension and vocabulary test scores above the mean for the group. It would appear, therefore,

that it was not the learners who interacted the most who benefited from the naturally simplified input, but rather those who adopted a listening role.

These two studies provide clear evidence that input that is modified naturally in the course of interaction aids comprehension and facilitates vocabulary acquisition. This kind of input seems to work better than pre-modified input for both acquisition and vocabulary learning. It should also be noted that the interactionally modified input was derived from whole-class, lockstep instruction, not from group work. This is not to suggest that group work might not have proved equally or even more effective, but it shows that the advantages of input obtained through interaction hold even in conditions that are least conducive to modifying the structure of conversation[4].

The differences between the results obtained by the two studies may reflect the differing levels of motivation of the learners. Yamazaki's learners were more highly motivated than Tanaka's because they would need to perform well in English to enter the universities of their choice (i.e. they had strong instrumental motivation). Thus, Yamazaki's baseline subjects worked harder to cope with the difficult input than did Tanaka's, with the result that their comprehension was not significantly worse than those who received the easier pre-simplified input. Also, Yamazaki's pre-simplified subjects did not do significantly worse in vocabulary acquisition on the second and third post-tests than the interactional subjects, because they probably made up the difference evident in the first post-test through private study of the vocabulary items outside class. What this suggests is that motivation - as we have always known - is an important mediating variable. Interestingly, though, interactionally modified input seems to be particularly beneficial for less motivated students, perhaps because, as McNamara (1973) has suggested, the act of communicating is itself intrinsically motivating.

There is, however, one major caveat that needs to be stated. There was a marked difference in the time taken by the pre-simplified and interactional groups to complete the task. Tanaka reports that his subjects took 10 minutes to do the task with pre-simplified input but 40 minutes for the subjects in the interactional condition. It is not clear, therefore, whether the advantages observed for interactionally modified input derive from increased exposure or from the opportunity to focus on problem items. Input that is simplified naturally through interaction may result in better comprehension and may facilitate vocabulary learning, but it is likely to take up more time. Is it, therefore, ultimately more efficient?

These three studies demonstrate that providing learners with opportunities for communicating in a classroom setting leads to vocabulary acquisition. They also show that the learning that takes place is retained better than that resulting from rote-memorization and is quantitatively greater than the learning that occurs as a result of trying to comprehend pre-simplified input. Interactionally modified input promotes effective vocabulary learning in poorly motivated as well as highly motivated students and seems to work as well, if not better, for those who participate in it silently as for those who engage productively. However, the provision of interactionally modified input is time-consuming.

Conclusion

It is probably true to say that in language teaching circles the idea of 'simplified input' has been used mainly to refer to the graded reading and listening materials which abound on publishers' lists. One of my purposes in this paper has been to argue that the notion of simplified input needs to be widened. To this end, I suggested a distinction between naturally simplified input and pedagogically simplified input and with regard to the latter a further distinction between graded input and input as dependent exemplification. I have also pointed out that discussions of the value of simplified input need to distinguish the part that it plays in comprehension from its role in acquisition. These distinctions will hopefully refine the questions that we need to address in both a research agenda and in language teaching.

It is clearly premature to come to any definite conclusions regarding which type of simplified input is most beneficial. The three studies by Temple University students which have been reported in this paper lend support to the theoretical claims of Long and others that naturally simplified input is particularly important for acquisition - at least in the case of vocabulary. The opportunity to interact around unknown lexical items seems to provide the conditions not only for comprehending their meaning but also for acquiring them. In this respect it seems to work better than pedagogically simplified input. But we do not know yet whether such input is more efficient in the long term. Nor do we yet know what kinds of interactional modifications provide the best naturally simplified input for purposes of learning. In Tanaka's and Yamazaki's studies, it was requests for clarification that triggered the necessary adjustments. However, other topic incorporation devices, such as confirmation requests and comprehension checks may work equally well. Also, we do not know whether naturally simplified input works as well for acquiring new grammatical features as it does for vocabulary. Indeed, recent studies of immersion programmes in Canada (e.g. Swain, 1985)

suggest that even when learners have plentiful opportunities to interact in the classroom, they do not appear to learn the more marked grammatical features of the target language. It could be the case, therefore, that naturally simplified input is good for learning certain types of items (e.g. those that are crucially meaning-bearing) but not so good for learning others (e.g. those that are redundant in the sense that they do not contribute strongly to the meaning content of an utterance). This, however, is speculative.

It would also be mistaken to suggest that pedagogically simplified input of the kind found in readers is of no use to learners. It clearly is of great use. First, it helps comprehension - and this, in itself, is sufficient to justify its use in language teaching. West (1950) is surely right when he commented:

> Simplification and abridgement have brought to life not a few books which, for the foreign reader and the English school child, would be otherwise completely dead.

It would also seem likely that pedagogically simplified input helps acquisition, although this remains to be clearly demonstrated, even where vocabulary is concerned[5]. Many learners will have only limited opportunities to experience naturally simplified input. Such learners will be largely dependent on reading and listening material which they use on their own. Thus, even if naturally simplified input is best, most learners will probably have to make do with second-best, and this is surely pedagogically simplified input rather than the input found in 'authentic' texts intended for native speakers (cf. Vincent, 1986).

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that neither naturally simplified input nor pedagogically simplified input are monolithic phenomena. Each type varies enormously. There are many devices available to speakers to deal with problems of understanding that arise in unplanned discourse and the selections they make will affect the input that becomes available to the learner. Similarly, there are different ways of going about pre-simplifying a text, as reflected in the rich literature on preparing graded readers. We need to be aware, then, that comparing the effectiveness of one type of simplified input with another is not a simple undertaking.

Notes

1. As Davies (1984) points out simplicity is a difficult notion because what is 'simple' linguistically may not be 'simple' psycholinguistically. 'Simplified input' in this paper refers only to the idea of linguistically simple, as one of the questions addressed is whether such input is psycholinguistically simple in the sense that it facilitates comprehension and learning. Also, as Widdowson (1978) has noted, the notion of 'simplified input' implies that there is some kind of 'source' which has been made simple (intentionally or without conscious intention). However, the term 'simplified input' is not intended to suggest that a 'source' has been adapted in some way in this paper. Rather it refers to what Widdowson calls a 'simple account', with the one difference that here it includes spoken as well as written language.

2. The distinction between experiential and analytic approaches to language teaching also involves differences in the kind of output that learners are required to produce. In the case of experiential language teaching, learners' production occurs in the context of activities that call for a focus on the content of the message (i.e. functional practice), while in analytic language teaching production occurs in the context of activities that call for a focus on the code (i.e. formal practice).

3. It is not intended to suggest that because learners receive simplified input in the course of message-oriented activities that they do not engage periodically in some kind of analysis of the code used to convey the message. Indeed, it is arguable that for acquisition (as opposed for comprehension) to take place learners must notice and analyse code features.

4. There is evidence to suggest that interactional adjustments occur more frequently in two-way information exchange activities if the activities are carried out in small group work rather than in teacher-fronted lessons (Pica and Doughty, 1985).

5. Unfortunately the studies by Tanaka and Yamazaki did not provide information regarding the relative effects of baseline vs pedagogically simplified input on the learners' vocabulary acquisition.

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